

A quick quiz about a pop collectible

By Roger Boye

Here's a short quiz on paper money, one of the most popular collectibles ever made. As usual, answers are at the end, but no fair peeking until you've done your best.

1. True or false: The phrase "not worth a continental" evolved during the Revolutionary War when currency issued by the Continental Congress became almost worthless.

2. Before 1929, United States currency was about 30 percent larger than modern-day money. Bureaucrats reduced the size to [A] save paper and ink, [B] make bills easier to use, [C] standardize front- and back-side designs, or [D] all of those.

3. The back sides of \$1 bills depict a partially built pyramid. What does it signify?

4. True or false: Uncle Sam has issued currency in denominations as high as \$100,000, but \$500 is the top amount printed today.

5. What's an easy way to identify many counterfeit bills?

6. One million \$1 bills weigh [A] 190 pounds, [B] 500 pounds, [C] 1 ton, or [D] 8 tons.

7. How long does the average \$1 bill last in circulation? The average \$100 bill?

8. Government printers often describe a stack of 4,000 bills as [A] a small fortune, [B] a brick, [C] a golden pile, or [D] a block.

9. Some collectors will pay \$2,000 or more for a double denomination note, the rarest of all freak bills. What is it?

10. The so-called "Barr notes" printed in 1969 create much excitement among novice hobbyists. What's rare about them?

ANSWERS:

1. True. At war's end, bureaucrats exchanged the currency for bonds at 1 percent of face value.

2. D. Many people found the older notes too large and nicknamed them "horse blankets."

3. The nation, incomplete because more work is needed to form a perfect government. It's part of the Great Seal of the United States adopted in 1782.

4. False. \$100 is highest; the government last issued bills of \$500 or more in 1969.

5. Check the paper. Counterfeits often lack the tiny red and blue fibers embedded into paper used to make legitimate bills.

6. C, and they occupy 42 cubic feet of space, the size of about three car trunks.

7. 18 months for \$1 bills, up to 22 years for \$100 bills.

8. B.

9. A bill with one denomination printed on the front side and another denomination on the back side.

10. Nothing, although many amateurs think otherwise. Joseph W. Barr was secretary of the Treasury for only one month at the end of President Lyndon Johnson's administration. But workers still produced more than 400 million \$1 bills bearing his signature, all series 1963-B.